

deprivation, it will be softened by the lenient hand of time.\*

The lingering months of an aged man are soothed almost, it is pretended, into cheerfulness, by the respectful attention of his neighbours; by the worldly prosperity and dutiful regard of the family he has brought up; by the innocent gaiety and amusing activity of their children; and by the consideration of his fair character in society. If he is a man of thought, he has the added advantage of some philosophical considerations: the cares and passions of his former life are calmed into a wise tranquillity; he thinks he has had a competent share of life; it is as proper and necessary for mankind to have their "exits," as their "entrances;" and his business will now be to make a "well-graced" retreat from the stage, like a man that has properly acted his part, and may retire with applause.

As to the means of sustaining the spirit in death, the general voice of these authors asserts the chief and only all-sufficient one to be the recollection of a well-spent life. Some minor repellents of fear are added; as for instance, that death is in fact a far less tremendous thing than that dire form of it by which imagination and superstition are haunted; that the sufferings in death are less than men often endure in the course of life; that it is only like one of those transformations with which the world of nature abounds; and that it is easy to conceive, and reasonable to expect, a more commodious vehicle and habitation. It would seem almost unavoidable to glance a thought toward what revelation has signified to us of "the house not made with hands," of the "better country, that is, the heavenly." But the greater number of the writers of taste advert to the scene beyond this world with apparent reluctance, unless it can be done, on the one hand, in the manner of pure philosophical conjecture, or on the other, under the form of

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\* Can it be necessary to notice here again, that every system of moral sentiments must inevitably contain some principles not disclaimed by Christianity; with whose dictates various particulars in this assemblage of consolations are not inconsistent if held in a subordinate rank? But the enumeration taken altogether, and exclusively of the grand Christian principles, forms a scheme of consolation essentially different from that so beneficently displayed in the religion of Christ.